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By Henry Unger
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The Georgia peanut industry is flying high.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is backing off from a proposed rule that could have banned peanuts on airplanes, after realizing it didn't have the legal authority to do so, AJC reporter Bob Keefe writes.

The DOT has issued a clarification stating that it was wrong when it issued an official notice of proposed rulemaking earlier this month, Keefe reports. Such a peanut ban would have violated a 2000 appropriations act that funds the DOT, the agency acknowledged.

The DOT's original peanut ban proposal on June 8 drew cheers from peanut allergy sufferers but scorn from Georgia's peanut growers and the politicians who represent them, Keefe writes. Georgia is the country's biggest peanut producer.

"This is great news for all peanut producers, especially those in Georgia," said Democratic U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop of Albany, whose district includes numerous peanut farms.

